

Christmas Wishes for You All

This brings a wish for happiness
For hopes and dreams come true,
For every *single* thing in fact
That means the *most* to you.
For Circuses, dry lots, and friends
And you and I to meet and sort
Of sit and chat awhile—
Makes life complete.



Your President,
BETTE LEONARD

Season's Greetings

from

Western Pennsylvania and
Eastern Ohio

*Brighter skies for the Big Tops
in '57*



KAY GOFF, McKees Rock, Pa.

JOHN MONNIN, Sharon, Pa.

GERALD HARSHMAN, Salem, Ohio

MYRON GANDEE, Youngstown, Ohio

CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Founded in 1939

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279 N. Main St., Camden, Ohio

Editor of the Bandwagon AGNES W. KING
P. O. Box 235, Richmond, Ind.

Associate Editors
JOHN C. KUNZOG
36 Norton Ave., Jamestown, N. Y.
CHARLIE DUBLE
612 E. Maple St., Jeffersonville, Ind.
Staff Writers Bill Kasiska, Bill Green, Joseph T. Bradbury, Jake Posey, Tom Parkinson, Edward W. Cripps.
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THIS, THAT AND THE OTHER

We have completed our full allotment of Directors, with the announcement by Bette Leonard, President, that she has appointed Glenn R. Draper of Burley, Idaho, as Director of Div. 7.

Mills Bros. have bought the aluminum poles that were used on the King Bros. Circus last year. Jack Mills announces that the show will be all new in '57 with only one clown holdover from the '56 season.

The George W. Cole Circus is in Winter Quarters at Conroe Texas, near Houston, where they have an outdoor zoo this winter.

For all those who inquired we wish to state that it was not Ann King's school that burned, fortunately for her. She is very happy at Cottey College, Nevada, Missouri. She has had visitors from some circus folk and made new friends through her circus connections.

NEW MEMBERS

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Louisville 15, Kentucky.

Frank Cucksey, No. 622
2222 Phillippi St.,
Sarasota, Florida.

Wishing All of Our Friends

A Merry Christmas

and a

Happy New Year

That Will Be Filled With
Sawdust and Spangles



FRED BAILEY THOMPSON
AND
ANNETTE THOMPSON

DUN-ROVIN FARM

—
CLARKSTON, GA.

Season's Greetings

FROM THE ORGAN MAN OF
WESTERN CANADA

and

Collector of Anything in
the Amusement World



G. E. LEOPOLD

"Circus Leo"

C. H. S. 447



Season's Greetings

FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD

SID BAKER

PADDINGTON, N.S.W., AUSTRALIA



Sincere Holiday Greetings

FROM

MARGARET, JEAN AND JAMES COTTER

C. H. S. C. F. A.

GLENS FALLS, NEW YORK



Season's Greetings

TO EVERY ONE OF YOU

JOHNNY VOGELSONG

NILES, MICHIGAN

Season's Greetings

AND BEST WISHES FOR 1957



HAGEN BROS. CIRCUS

HOWARD SUESZ, Owner

BOB COULS, Manager

HOWDY FOLKS! HOWDY!
A BIG MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU.

JOHN C. ARTER
C.H.S. 486

Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year
To Circus Folks and Fans Everywhere

PEARL MAGDEN
ELGIN, ILLINOIS

HOLIDAY GREETINGS TO EVERYBODY EVERYWHERE



And an orchid to those who proved their true friendship during my recent hospital 'vacation' in the successful operation to save my waning eyesight.



WALTER B. FOX

P. O. Box 147

Mobile 2, Ala.

Season's Greetings

TO ALL OUR CIRCUS FRIENDS

MELVIN, FRAN, JERRY, AND
LARRY OLSEN

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

KIND WISHES ALWAYS TO ALL MEMBERS
AND FAMILIES AND SHOWFOLKS
EVERYWHERE

BILL KASISKA

VICE PRESIDENT, C.H.S.

Merry Christmas

TO ALL C.H.S. MEMBERS AND TO ALL MY
CIRCUS FRIENDS

FLOYD GETTINGER

UNION CITY, INDIANA

"WHITEY" SAYS —

I'LL SEE YOU ON THE LOT—AND AT THE '57 CONVENTION

**MERRY CHRISTMAS and A NEW YEAR
OF CIRCUSES**



RAYMOND G. "WHITEY" WHITE

C. H. S. No. 493

RICHMOND, INDIANA

Christmas Greetings

FROM UHRICHSVILLE TO ALL YOU FANS
AND PERFORMERS

"NO PIE 'JUNIOR'—YOU'LL HAVE TO TAKE
IT OUT OF YOUR ALLOWANCE."

FLOYD "DADDY" McCLINTOCK

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

TO OUR FRIENDS EVERYWHERE

F. C. FISHER AND SON CIRCUS
PERU, INDIANA

See European Circuses!

This is not a dream but could be a reality. I know many members have always wanted to go to England for the Christmas Circus Season, but this is even better than that.

We have received a letter from Kay Goff of McKees Rocks, Pa., and I quote:

"I mentioned my desire to see European circuses to a New York travel agency friend and he has told me that he would be delighted to arrange a tour of Europe for interested Circus Fans in the 'Late Season' of next year (Sept.-Dec.) covering many European countries and circuses including backyard visits with the European stars. The Spanish and Viennese riding schools would be a feature. Also animal importing by big game men from Africa via ports of Europe.

"Fans will be given special rates from \$625. This includes round trip steamer fare, meals, tips, hotels, admissions, sightseeing, English speaking interpreters, etc. The only things not included are \$10 passport fee, \$5 Franco-Italian port tax, laundry, and alcoholic beverages. There will be ample time for sightseeing, shopping, and meeting the European fans who will be welcomed to our hotels throughout Europe. The length of time of the trip has not yet been determined but a minimum of 16 days has been mentioned.

"The tour is open for suggestions by circus lovers. I'm sure it would be close to impossible to have so much fun at so low a cost in Europe any other way. Ships are Cunard Steamers' Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth."

Doesn't that sound fabulous. Kay will send you any more information now, and you have a year to save for it. Write Kay Goff, 1820 Pine Hollow Road, McKees Rocks, Pa.

FOR SALE—Duplicates from my collection

1. Robbins Bros. Herald, 22 x 16, 1907—\$5.00
2. B & B Route sheet, \$1.00—1908, first year under Ringling management—good—\$3.00.
3. Robinsons Ten Enormous Shows, 28 x 20 Herald—1904—Rugged but readable, 2 colors—\$7.00.
4. Sells Floto Program, 1925—16 pages—mint—\$3.50.
5. Sells Floto-Tom Mix Program, 1929—fair—32 pages—\$3.50.

BAKER W. YOUNG

70 Stewart Street, Athens, Ohio

Christmas Greetings

TO

ALL OUR C.H.S. FRIENDS

AND TO

ALL PERFORMERS
EVERYWHERE



LLOYD W. BENDER RAY P. MARKLE

Holiday Greetings

FROM

HARRY SIMPSON
CAMDEN, OHIO

CIRCUS! From Rome To Ringling

"Circus! From Rome to Ringling. Marian Murray.

Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York City. \$7.95

There has been a long felt need for a book that may be called "authoritive" on the history of the circus. This is not it. It is however good reading, and it does tell many of the often quoted facts about the circus. At the same time, it skips from point to point and the reader quite often has trouble knowing what the author, Marian Murray, is trying to put over.

We read of the early so-called circus that the Greeks and the Romans had. We are carried along through the English version, and into America. We are told of many unrelated facts of the American Circus, such as Barnum and his Side Show; the Showboats; the Wagon Shows; and on until the Ringling dynasty. Many shows are mentioned—but not enough is said of anyone of them to make their stories of value.

Other chapters are devoted to Clowns, animal trainers, elephants, and other single topics. As in the other chapters—not enough is told of any of them.

Last but not least, Marian Murray has forgotten to mention that there are other circuses, beside Ringling Bros. Barnum and Bailey, and leaves us with the taste in our mouths that we who love a circus, are never to see one again—under canvas. It seems that some mention might have been made of the many other circuses in America today, who are upholding the real old fashioned traditions of the "CIRCUS!"

C. H. S. MEMBER DIES

Frank H. Runser, of Fort Wayne, Indiana, died October 2. He was 72 years old. He was well known for his carvings of circus wagons. His carvings were on an exact scale of one inch for each foot, making scale drawings to use as guides. Each wagon was an exact replica of the original and he constructed wheels just as they are built by a blacksmith. Each wagon had more than 100 pieces and the ensemble was completed by a team of horses, also hand carved, and bright paint.

He was also a member of the Circus Fans Association and second Vice-President of the Midwest Showmen's Club.

His survivors include a son, four grandchildren and two brothers.

Greetings

TO

ALL MEMBERS OF
CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Come and See Us Anytime



JOHN L. SULLIVAN
CIRCUS HALL OF FAME
SARASOTA, FLORIDA

ment was made, the news spread like wildfire, and the tent was packed for the initial performance. True, the crowd say only a man sitting quietly in a cage with two young lions lying at his feet, but the act was new and had never been attempted before, and so it seemed daring and dangerous to the people. From this safe beginning date all the difficulties and thrilling acts which can be seen today.

When we were at Minneapolis, the greatest wheat market in the world, I had the pleasure of seeing the best-trained animal now living, the man-ape or chimpanzee, "Consul." He is not a beauty, but he certainly is educated—eats and drinks like a human being, plays the piano, and uses a typewriter and seems to understand what he is doing, at any rate, he can make his mark even if he cannot write his name.

At San Francisco, the ninth largest city in the United States, I saw the Cliff House and the Golden Gate Park, a most beautiful park which extends three miles inland from the shore and coast. Then at Los Angeles, with its semi-tropical climate, I also found much to see and interest me. The city has six parks and is a great health resort. The University of Southern California is also located there. Near here is the greatest and largest ostrich farm in the world. Troops of ostriches of all ages and sizes can always be seen in the large enclosures; and the feathers which they grow and have to give up each year, can be seen and found in nearly every city of our country. No wonder! for there is nothing more graceful or beautiful to place upon a lady's hat than a fine, large, waving ostrich plume.

At Vicksburg, the Southern city of the hills, and one of the largest cotton markets in the United States, we had a very serious accident, costing us the life of two of our largest elephants, and a camel, dromedary, and llama. No one seems to know what caused it, but suddenly during our morning parade, a panic seized our drove of elephants and in their mad rush they pushed two of their number, and the camel, dromedary, and llama from a high embankment into the waters of the Mississippi River. The three last named were killed instantly and the two elephants were so badly injured that they, too, soon ceased to breathe.

One of the elephants killed was a very good friend of mine and I feel his loss keenly. He had a great sense of humor and was always trying to play tricks on the other animals; for instance, he thought it great fun to fill his trunk with water and then blow it onto and drench to the skin one of the lions or tigers. It was sport for him, but hard on the lion or tiger. Another thing that gave him delight was to snatch the derby hat from the head of his keeper and send it spinning across the tent, or across the street or ground if he was out of doors or walking in the parade. His keeper often fooled him, however, by tying the hat onto his head, then when he tried to snatch and throw it, the joke was on Mr. Elephant and not on the keeper, for he couldn't get the hat off of the keeper's head.

And now I will have to bid you goodby for the season. I hope my seven letters have proven interesting and instructive and that all of you may have profited by the facts and fancies contained in same.

Merry
Christmas
C. H. S.



Les. and Bonnie Ulrich

With The Greatest Show On Earth

(OLEANDER'S SEVENTH LETTER)

By John G. Quinius

Written in 1900 by John G. Quinius. Furnished the Band Wagon by his son Herman M. Quinius, CFA of Bette Leonard Tent, Wichita, Kansas. Please note these stories were written and published for childrens entertainment over 55 years ago.

Home again! The season is over and I am glad of it. Six months' traveling and the daily excitement brought about by the sight of vast crowds of people is enough to try one's nerves and cause a sigh and longing for a period of rest.

Since writing my last letter, I have been across the continent, stopping at Minneapolis, Battle Creek, Pierre, Salt Lake City, Leavenworth, Helena, and Los Angeles on our way west to San Francisco, and then back to our winter quarters through the Southern States, with stops at Joseph, Fort Worth, San Antonio, Waco, Dallas, New Orleans, Memphis, Vicksburg, Jackson, and Little Rock, and quite a number of smaller places the names of which I cannot recall just at present. It was a hop, skip, and jump the entire season. Now for four months we will have a comparatively quiet time and all of us will take a good rest.

I shall put in lots of my time in sleeping. I feel right now as though I could sleep a month. I sometimes wish that I was a ground-hog or a bear, so that I could do as they, and spend all the winter sleeping.

I do not believe that many of you know that the noisiest time of the day with all animals is when they awaken in the morning. The elephants, who have been sleeping, lying on their left sides, with their trunks curled up, and emitting at regular intervals a sound which resembles a man snoring, and snoring hard, are among the first to arise and begin the day with many trumpet-like blasts. Then the tigers and lions begin to roar, and the bears and panthers and leopards begin to growl, and then amid the general daybreak chorus, you hear the weird and grawsome laugh of the hyenas and the howling of the wolves. If you didn't know that the owners of these voices were all safely in their cages and behind strong bars, your hair would certainly stand on end and a chilly, creepy feeling run down your back.

By-and-by all become quiet again and patiently wait for their breakfast. Then at breakfast time there is another short noisy time, while the food is being passed into the cages by the keepers and attendants.

When I wrote you about the training of animals I forgot to state that Mr. George Wombell was the first showman to have a man to enter a lion's cage. Two of the young lions he had in his menagerie were taken sick and the trainer noting how weak they were thought it safe to enter their cage and did so. "When in the cage the thought came to him, "Why could I not do this with an audience looking on?" The idea struck the proprietor as being good and as having great possibilities for use as an attendance-procurer. So the announce-

Season's Greetings

TO ALL C. H. S. MEMBERS



PAUL LUCKEY
AND THE
SAUK COUNTY CIRCUS BAND

"YOUR HOSTS IN '58"

Greetings

TO ALL MY FRIENDS,
PERFORMERS AND FANS



FRANK VAN EPPS
PORTAGE, WISCONSIN

From The Billboard, Sept. 6, 1913)

Shenandoah, Pa., Aug. 26—A riot was caused here late Saturday night during the performance of the Sig Sautelle Nine Big Shows, when a mob threw stones in the dressing room and the cowboys and canvasmen charged them with pistols and clubs. Three men were probably fatally injured. John Ellis was picked up unconscious and is in a serious condition. Walter Washington was shot in the left breast and Will Berne received a fractured skull. All were with the show. Others were slightly injured. The chief of police arrested Warren Potter of Boston, charged with the assaults. He is in prison awaiting the results of the injuries of the three men. The tent was crowded with people when the riot occurred, and a panic was almost created. The big top almost collapsed, owing to several ropes being cut.

Sanger's European Show experienced a very severe blow-down while playing Gettysburg, Pa., August 18. The tents were pitched on the old battlefield an ideal place for handling the show. At 5 o'clock in the evening it became very dark and a fierce wind storm turned up so suddenly that no one had time to save anything except their lives. Luckily no one was in the big top at the time and no one was seriously injured. One center pole, another in the menagerie tent were broken, one horse killed outright, and others badly hurt and the tents so badly damaged that manager Thilman has ordered a lot of new canvas from the U. S. Tent & Awning Co., Chicago.

A report has been making the rounds in Chicago that Ringling Brothers will probably send out the Forepaugh-Sells Show next season. The rumor went so far as to state that the parade has been arranged and that twenty open dens had been contracted for. The rumor was taken up by A. K. Greenland, general travelling representative of The Billboard, who made a flying trip to Baraboo, August 31, where an interview with Al. Ringling at his residence, disclosed the information that while the matter had been debated and the deal considered, no preparations had as yet been perfected for 1914. He admitted, however, that this show would be resurrected, and that very probably it would be on the road in 1915. (NOTE)—The final year for the FOREPAUGH & SELLS BROTHERS SHOW was season of 1911. The show then owned by Ringling Brothers was retired for good at the close of that year. All equipment was taken to the Baraboo winter quarters. Charlie Duble.

The W. H. Harris World Famous Nickel Plate Show exhibited at Jeffersonville, Ind., Sept. 28, 1901. Gentry Bros. Famous Shows followed, Sept. 30.

The Great Van Amburg Show exhibited same city, May 18, 1907. Gentry Bros. Famous Shows followed May 20.

*Merry Christmas and a
Happy New Year*

TO CIRCUS FOLKS AND FANS
EVERYWHERE

DIVISION 3 DIRECTORS

James Mac Innes

Charles B. Kistler

*A Merry Christmas
To All*

R. D. OLDFIELD

"OLD ACRES"

ELYRIA, OHIO

Where the Circuses Were in September, 1913

(Contributed by Charlie Duble, Associate Editor)

Barnum & Bailey Greatest Show On Earth—Joplin, Mo., Sept. 10.
Ringling Bros. Worlds Greatest Shows—Visalia, Calif., Sept. 5.
Gollmar Bros. Circus—Eagle Grove, Iowa, Sept. 12.
Gentry Bros. Famous Shows—Jeffersonville, Ind., Sept. 5.
Sells-Floto Circus—Logansport, Ind., Sept. 9.
John H. Sparks Circus—Flemingsburg, Ky., Sept. 4.
Sig Sautelle Circus—Uniontown, Pa., Sept. 5.
Mighty Haag Circus—Charleston, Mo., Sept. 6.
Howes Great London Show—Ironton, Ohio, Sept. 8.
J. H. Eschman's European Shows—LaCrosse, Ind., Sept. 6.
Downie & Wheeler Circus—Georgetown, Del., Sept. 13.
Hagenbeck-Wallace Shows—Memphis, Tenn., Sept. 8.
Yankee Robinson Circus—Fort Madison, Iowa, Sept. 6.
Frank A. Robbins Circus—Ralston, Pa., Sept. 3.
Al. G. Barnes Show—Las Vegas, N. M., Sept., Sept. 12.
Miller Bros. & Arlington's 101 Ranch Wild West—Muncie, Ind.,
Sept. 6.
Young Buffalo Wild West—Cape Charles, Va., Sept. 5.

Smaller Shows

Cole & Cooper—Selmer, Tenn., Sept. 4.
Jones Bros. Show—Hendersonville, N.C., Sept. 10.
Backman's Animal Show (John T. Backman, mgr.)—Indianapolis,
Ind., Sept. 8-13.
Starrett's Circus (H. S. Starrett, mgr.)—Lancaster, N. H., Sept. 2-5.
Irwin Bros. Wild West—Milwaukee, Wisc., Sept. 8-13.
I. X. L. Ranch Wild West (Jack W. King, mgr.)—Knoxville, Tenn.,
Sept. 8-13.
Thompkins Wild West & Cooper & Whitby Show—Latrobe, Pa.,
Sept. 6.
Wyoming Bill's Wild West—Spencer, W. Va., Sept. 6.
Fowler & Clark Dog & Pony Show—Clinton, Ill., Sept. 8.
M. L. Clark & Son (wagon show)—Watonga, Okla., Sept. 3.
Robson Bros Show (wagon show)—Hooversville, Pa., Sept. 3.
Honest Bill's Show (wagon show)—Hickory, Okla., Sept. 10.

* * *

Downie Bros. Circus (Chas. Sparks, owner) and the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus played day and date at Waukegan, Ill., Sat., Sept. 3, 1932. The Downie Circus was one day ahead of the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus at Cape Girardeau, Missouri, Sept. 12, same year.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

TO ALL THE CIRCUS BOYS AND GIRLS

CHARLES PUCK

LOS ANGELES

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold,
I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be
to all people. For unto you is born this day in the
city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."
Luke 2:10, 11.

ARTHUR VERNON ISENBERG

Holiday Greetings

ORLO J. RAHN

DAVENPORT, IOWA

TO EVERYONE

A Very Merry Christmas

HERMAN V. LINDEN

AURORA, ILLINOIS

Director Division No. 5

All the B. & B. staff members were retained, and the Ringling employees were let go. So Eddie went with the Yankee Robinson show as press representative.

A year later he joined the Sparks circus press department and remained until the show was sold to the Ringling-Barnum & Bailey interests in 1930. Eddie has been with the "big show" in various capacities since then with the exception of two seasons as publicity director of Benson's Wild Animal Farm at Nashua, N. H., and one season with Hamid's circus at the New York World's Fair in 1941.

Since 1930 Jackson also has been employed theatrically, managing such attractions as "House of a Thousand Candles," which played at the old Grand theater in Akron. Tom Powell's Minstrels of Springfield, O., "Paid in Full" and "The Girl He Left Behind" Eddie's last theatrical engagement was a general agent of "The Chocolate Soldier" Opera Co.

Eddie has a prodigious memory. He reels off names, dates, places as if he were reading about them. He rolls his own cigarettes.

He has been making his home in the winter with his sister and a nephew at 64 Hawthorne avenue. His sister, Mrs. L. M. Latta, now is in a nursing home after suffering a heart attack. The nephew, Melyne Latta, was producer and director of the recent Akron Junior Follies.

Eddie, a bachelor, expects to leave Akron March 15 to join the Ringling-Barnum & Bailey show at Madison Square Garden, New York. He may retire after 1950, at the age of 75.

"But, like all dyed-in-the-wool showmen, I probably will keep on," he says.

Christmas Greetings

AND A WISH THAT ALL MAY GO WELL
WITH YOU DURING THE
COMING YEAR



GEORGE L. CHINDAHL

Season's Greetings

TO ALL FANS EVERYWHERE

YOU COME SEE US ANYTIME, ANYWHERE

GEO. W. COLE CIRCUS

Favorite Show of the West

WINTER QUARTERS HIGHWAY 75

CONROE, TEXAS

Holiday Greetings

FROM ROSE BOWL IN PASADENA

ERIC WILSON

(Iowa Advance Man)

Greetings

TO THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

LEONARD WEIGLE

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA

the show arrived in Danville, Ill., Eddie left his \$50 chinchilla over-coat on the smoker and carried off the \$18 drum. He never found his coat.

After his medicine show experience, it was easier for Eddie to get an engagement. He signed up with Neil Burgess County Fair Co. Its original racing drama had three treadmills and three thoroughbreds running at full speed.

Eddie played a jockey part. The horse he rode was called Cold Molasses, always the winner of the race. On opening night in Boston the 850-pound treadmill, the horse and Eddie went through the stage floor into a basement dressing room used by 20 extra girls.

No one was hurt. All the girls were up watching the race. Neither Eddie nor the horse was hurt.

The following season he spent with Fritz & Webster A-Breezy Time Co., eastern division. He did several dancing acts, among them one called "Hurricane, the Three-Legged Sailor."

Eddie's' right leg was strapped to his partner's left leg and they got into a baggy pair of sailor pants with three legs. They had to dance with a 40-pound papier-mache head with a peephole under the head's mustache.

One night his partner missed the peephole and they pitched headlong into the orchestra pit.

While rehearsing with the company in a church basement in Chicago, Eddie ran into Cready Primrose of Akron whose real name was Smith. He took his stage name from George Primrose, famous minstrel.

Cready, then general agent of Gentry Bros. Famous Dog and Pony show, and Eddie were old friends. Cready told Eddie he was going to make an agent of him, have him start at the bottom and work up.

Eddie opened in Little Rock, Ark., with Gentry Bros. as programer four days ahead of the show, and also had to contract for dog feed from hotels and restaurants.

That meant anything except egg shells, coffee grounds, fish bones and vegetables. On show day the restaurant proprietor got one ticket for every pail of dog feed.

Eddie left Gentry Bros. in 1905 to contact the Campbell Bros. 36-car railroad show emanating from Fairburg, Neb. About 1910 he was employed as a movie actor for Selig Polyscope Co. in Chicago. When he learned he would have to do stunts in deep water, in the Chicago river and Lake Michigan, Eddie quit the lucrative movies and returned to Campbell Bros.

Later he was with Gollmar Bros., cousins of the Ringlings, the John Robinson circus and Downie & Wheeler circus, eastern division, as 24-hour advance man.

In 1913 he joined the Sells-Floto Buffalo Bill show in Denver as press representative. He handled all publicity for Buffalo Bill, Jess Willard, then heavyweight champion, and Frank Gotch of Humboldt, Ia., then world's champion heavyweight wrestler, all in "Champion Shows of the World."

When the show hit Eddie's home town, Goshen, a newspaper headlined proclaimed: "Eddie Jackson Circus in Town Today." To the home folks it was Eddie's circus.

In 1918 Jackson joined Ringling Bros. to work in the ticket wagon, but the following year the show consolidated with Barnum & Bailey.

GREETINGS

TO ALL FANS

The British Circus Ring

*A Joyous Christmas
and a Year filled with
Happiness to All
Circus Friends and
Circus People
Everywhere*



JOHN W. BOYLE

Eddie Jackson's Dream Came True In Circus

BY OSCAR SMITH

Reprinted from Akron (Ohio) Beacon-Journal, Feb. 27, 1949

Eddie Jackson didn't run away from home to join the circus, but he knew at the age of 10 that the amusement world offered the only life for him.

Now, at 74, he has his winter headquarters in Akron and doesn't at the moment even think of retiring from his job in the advertising department of Ringling Bros.-Barnum & Bailey circus.

The wiry little man with the gray hair and sprightly step has been with many circuses, in medicine shows and theatricals since he first was bitten by the circus bug at the age of 10.

He has been with Ringlings and the two B's almost continually for the last 19 years. Actually, he got into the amusement business through a medicine show.

Eddie was born in Ligonier, Ind. As a boy he was fond of circuses, plays, all kinds of amusements.

The day after Sells Bros. railroad circus of Columbus played Ligonier, Eddie went to the lot and found an old copy of the New York Clipper, a publication then devoted entirely to circuses and theatricals.

Eddie was about 10 then. He memorized everything in the Clipper. Then he saved up \$5 for a year's subscription. That really started him in the show business—at least his interest in it.

A year or so later Wallace & Co. circus of Peru, Ind., came to Ligonier, and Eddies washed dishes on the lot to pay for his ticket. A windstorm blew down all the tents.

Eddie ran away from there as fast as he could. Circus men roared with laughter when they found the boy 200 yards away still clutching a tin pan from the cook tent.

When the circus departed the horse tent, damaged by the wind, was left lying on the ground. Eddies rescued the tent and made a circus of his own in his backyard. The price of admission was two cents. The show had acrobatic acts entirely with Eddie doing the horizontal bars.

He was about 15 when the Jackson family moved to Goshen, Ind. The girls in the town put on a home talent minstrel show, but they didn't have a girl leader for the orchestra.

"So they dressed me up in my sister's wedding gown and I directed the orchestra with a mandolin," says Eddie. "While I was doing a dancing act I tore the wedding dress. My sister has never forgiven me."

A medicine show hit Gashen and Eddie bought a pair of slap shoes, a banjo, blackface wig and a Taylor theatrical trunk from one of the performers. The latter helped Eddie get his first engagement, with the Herbs of Life Medicine show of Springfield, Ill.

Eddie was bass drummer in the band of the Herbs of Life show. He had to carry the drum and sit in the smoker on the train. When



The Kings are scattered from Indiana
to Missouri

But that only broadens their wish
to you

That this year brings the circus in a
hurry

With all good lots and acts to view.

Merry Christmas

BOB, AGNES and ANN

C. H. S.

BANDWAGON

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25¢



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